

## **INTERNATIONAL TRADE COORDINATION OF CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC WORLDS ON THE BASIS OF NUMISMATIC MATERIALS (X<sup>th</sup>-XIII<sup>th</sup> CC.)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Numismatic material on the Christian and Islamic countries is the most important source for different relations. Correct apprehension of these materials is of great importance for specifying the real nature of relations between these two worlds. Wrong interpretation may become a basis for incorrect understanding of some issues. This was what happened in regard to powerful and successful Georgian king David Aghmashenebeli (the Builder, 1089-1125). When the Arabian inscriptions were made on the coins minted by him, some scholars understood this as Georgians' political independence on the Islamic world. Research in this direction enabled us to obtain additional materials. Comparison of the eastern and western coins showed that coins minted in Great Britain in the VIII<sup>th</sup> century by King of Mersia were of Arabian dinar type with the Arabian inscriptions. We cannot talk on any political dependence on the Islamic world in the present case.

Coins with the Arabian inscriptions were also minted in some European countries in the XI<sup>th</sup>-XII<sup>th</sup> cc. It should be also mentioned that coins with the Arabian inscriptions were in circulation in Georgia in the same period. This was the period from unification of Georgia (the X<sup>th</sup> century) till the reign of Queen Tamar (1184-1213), when she had no serious rival in the Near East. Even later, Georgians as well Ilkhans preserved the Arabian inscriptions on the coins in their independent state. In the same period the Muslim and Georgian monetary systems of the Near East displayed great similarity, which witnessed coordination and agreement between themselves. It is proved by the Tebriz-Trabzon route used for the trade relations between the East and the West and by the same weight of the Tebriz and Trabzon coins.

International monetary-coin coordination connected with the Tebriz-Trabzon route, into which, together with other Christian peoples, Georgians were also involved with their coin system proceeding from the international trade interests, in some cases, was not connected, in any way, with political dependence. This is mentioned by the medieval author Rashid al-Din as well on the example of Georgia.

**Key Words:** Georgia, West, Near East, (the X<sup>th</sup>-XIII<sup>th</sup> cc.), trade coordination.

Numismatic material on the Christian and Islamic countries is the most important source for different relations between these two worlds. Correct apprehension of these materials is of great importance for specifying the real nature of their relations. Wrong interpretation may become a basis for incorrect understanding of some issues. Such a mistake was made, for example, by some scholars in regard to one of the most powerful and greatest reformer kings of Georgia, David Aghmashenebeli (the Builder, 1089-1125), who had liberated Georgia from numerous enemies and united the country. One of the results of his economic reform was the minting of coins with the Arabian inscriptions, which was understood as an example of Georgia's dependence on the Islamic world. The coins with the Arabian inscriptions are witnessed later as well, in the period of Georgia's political upraise. The question arises: What was it that caused appearance of the Arabian inscriptions and the names of the foreign owners on the Georgian coins? Some scholars explained this by Georgi's political dependence on the Islamic world [Pakhomov E. A., 1970; Vilchevski O. L., 1960; Husseinov R. A., 1971]. This viewpoint was quite justly refuted by the renowned Georgian scholar Iv. Javakhishvili [Javakhishvili I. A., 1912] still in the first half of the XX century. He explained this fact by the international trade interests and his consideration then and afterwards was shared by many other scholars [Kapanadze D., 1969; Bikov A., 1938; Lang D. M., 1955; Gabashvili M., 1987; Japaridze G., Ghvinjilia Z., 2002]. His correct consideration, along with introduction of some new materials, demands more grounded analysis and substantiation. A description of David's coin mentioned above was preserved by the Arab author al-Farik. Being at court of David's heir, Demetre I in Tbilisi, he focused special attention to the policy of King David and financial aspects of his reforms. On the one side of the coin, described by al-Farik, there were names of caliph and sultan engraved and of Allah and his apostle – on the other. The image of David himself was placed on the edge of the coin [Tsereteli, G., 1975].

While working on the epoch of King David and numismatic materials we paid attention to one most important circumstance. If it was usual to mint coins with the Arabian inscriptions after David liberated Tbilisi in 1122 and abolished Tbilisi Arab emirate, after 1122 there was ongoing the process of abolishing the Arabian official posts and of Georgianization of some others (emir, etc.) [Gabashvili M., 1981]. Thus, if on the one part, David Aghmashenebeli, with the aim of preserving international economic image of Tbilisi in Caucasus and the Near East, minted coins with the Arabian inscriptions, on the other, he started transformation of Tbilisi on the Georgian administrative basis. With this aim in view he connected Tbilisi to the Georgian urban order, making it thus a part of the Georgian feudal city. Such an analysis is of great importance for apprehending the relation of David Aghmashenebeli's policy with the Islamic world. David Aghmashenebeli's policy was attacking, if it threatened Georgia's state interests, in some cases it was balancing and peaceful, when it concerned

trade-economic aims and great traditions of cultural relations with the East. Liberation of Tbilisi by David was a serious defeat of the Islamic world in Caucasus and loss of control over Tbilisi. After 1122 the appearance of David's name on David's coin beside sultan and caliph pointed to serious power of this king for the East.

As it has already been mentioned coins with the Arabian inscriptions were minted in the period of David's heirs (Demetre I, Giorgi III, Queen Tamar, Lasha-Giorgi, Rusudan) as well, i.e. within the entire XII<sup>th</sup>-XIII<sup>th</sup> centuries, which is the period of Georgian policy flourishing. It should also be mentioned that there appeared on these coins an inscription in Arabian – “sword of messiah”. It co-existed on the coins of the Georgian kings along with the Arabian inscriptions of the same content. In this case these coins are interesting from the viewpoint of both Georgia's political aims and its relation with the Islamic world. We should take into consideration that the names of sultan and caliph were on the Georgian coins even when they were neither serious nor considerable power in the Near East. For example, on the coin of Giorgi III (1156-1159), the father of Queen Tamar, there are proved the names of Caliph al-Muktafi (1136-1159) and his rival Muhammad b. Mahmud, the Saljuq Sultan of Iraq. It should be stressed that the latter had no military conflict with Georgia and had never formed any danger to Georgia [Japaridze G., Ghvinjilia Z., 2002, p 298]. It should also be mentioned that caliph of Abassians was not important, serious force and Saljuq sultans of Iraq, among them Muhammad b. Mahmud could not have forced their political will on the Georgian kings. We would once more tackle this issue below. Here, we should mention that we came across with the Arabian inscriptions on the Georgian coins also in the period when the Georgian state reached its maximum power in the epoch of Queen Tamar (1184-1210, or 1213) and had no rival in the Near East. The Arabian inscription on Queen Tamar's coin (1187) acquiring international response was made to glorify her: “Queen splendid, beauty of the country and religion, Tamar, daughter of Giorgi, worshipper of messiah, let God glorify her fame, strengthen her prosperity” [Kapanadze D., 1969, p 65].

One more condition should be stressed, which proved another aspect in the importance of coins with the Arabian inscriptions in international trade. Our attention was attracted by the fact that along with coins with the Arabian inscriptions there were some with the Georgian inscriptions only, being one of the rare exceptions in the Georgian numismatics from this viewpoint. They were discovered in small amount, joint copper coins of Giorgi III (1156-1184) and Queen Tamar, minted to commemorate enthronement of Tamar by Giorgi and their joint rule. On one side of the coin there was an inscription G-I (Giorgi), on the other – “God, glorify King and Queen”. Naturally, a question arises. What is the reason of having no Arabian inscription on these coins, when before that such inscriptions, as a rule, were on the coins minted by Giorgi III himself and

Queen Tamar later? In our opinion, the joint coins of Giorgi III and Queen Tamar had different burden and were oriented not at external, but at internal factor. And, what is more important they seemed to have propaganda burden and were designated for national ideology. In addition, they were of ceremonial and memorial character as well, if we especially take into consideration rare and bigger coins. Our supposition is based on the reason of their minting mentioned above. Giorgi III, through this way, presented before Georgia not only his heiress, but a follower of his political course. In their turn, Tamar's children – Giorgi and Rusudan – considered they were followers of his heritage. They proved this by their coins, where they were mentioned not only by their father's, but also by their mother's descent. It should also be stressed that, as a rule, the inscription was made in Arabian with the aim of international response.

The work on the problems mentioned above enabled to find other additional materials. We focused our attention to the considerations the medieval authors also thought about. From this viewpoint, the evidence of Rashid ad-Din, an outstanding representative of Mongolian historiography (the XIII<sup>th</sup> cent. ) is of great importance, in which he writes about the Georgian monetary system: "Even in Georgia, where the coins have never been minted in the name of Allah and his apostle, forced by the situation they started minting such coins, though Georgians did not recognize Qazan-khan's power. Otherwise their money wouldn't be received anywhere."

[Rashid ad-Din, 1937]. It's clear that Rashid ad-Din knew quite well that as soon as the independent state of Ilkhans was founded, they started minting coins with the Arabian inscriptions. Comparison of the eastern and western coins showed that the coins minted in Great Britain in the VIII<sup>th</sup> century by King Ofa of Mersia were of Arabian dinar type with the Arabian inscriptions [Gabashvili M. , 1981, p 94, note 43]. We cannot evidently talk on any political dependence on the Islamic world in the present case. The coins with the Arabian inscriptions were also minted in Europe of the XI<sup>th</sup>-XII<sup>th</sup> centuries as well by the kings of Normandy Wilhelm I (1060-1087), Wilhelm II (1153-1189). Tankred II (1189-1194). We come across similar coins in South Italy, etc [Gabashvili M., 1981, p 94, notes 43-44]. It should be also mentioned that in the same period the coins with the Arabian inscriptions were in circulation in Georgia. The coins of such type were in Georgia from the X<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. starting from the unification of Georgia and even in the period, when Georgia, ruled by Queen Tamar, became the most powerful state in the Near East. Thus, in the period of Queen Tamar's reigning, when Georgia had no serious rival in the Near East, the Arabian inscriptions still remained on the coins. The information on the East being well aware of Georgia's strength and power, in conditions of coins with the Arabian inscriptions existing in Georgia, was delivered not only by the Georgian sources saying that all the sultans were afraid of Queen Tamar [Kartlis Tskhovreba, 1955], but by the oriental sources as well. One Persian document

of the 90s of the XII<sup>th</sup> century is most interesting from this viewpoint. According to it, Queen Tamar gives a guarantee of inviolability to the ruler of one of the Muslim states and gives him her promise not to arrange a campaign in his country [Giunashvili J., 1975]. The analysis of relevant numismatic material showed the analogous situation was later too.

With this approach to the numismatic materials, we mentioned above, some aspects of Georgia's policy and economic history and the relation with the Near East can be differently apprehended. We mean here the Mongols' invasions in Georgia, expansion of their rule and other problems, which are proved by the Mongol coins circulating in East Georgia. Before tackling this issue, we would like to point to another mistake, when numismatists discussed the monetary system in East and West Georgia of the XIII<sup>th</sup>-XIV<sup>th</sup> centuries separately and isolated. This was based on the further circumstance. In the period of Mongols' rule, established from the 50s of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century, the Mongolian coins were in circulation in East Georgia, Trabzon aspri and kirmanian – in West Georgia. This situation is explained with the policy implemented by Mongols in East Georgia. But is it so? On the basis of new understanding of the numismatic material, we tried to show that Georgia had a single state monetary policy even in the period of its disintegration (the XIII<sup>th</sup>-XIV<sup>th</sup> cc) [Gabashvili M. , 2005]. A question also arose, as to what extent this policy echoed with the monetary-coin system connected with the then international trade.

Numismatist E. Pakhomov, who specially researched the material of that period, paid attention to great similarity between the monetary systems of Muslim and Christian states in Front Asia of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century. In connection with this he expressed the supposition that there existed expedient agreement and coordination between them. [156kk]. Though, he wrote, this entire territory was under the Mongols' influence, some part of it formally, the other really, from the mid-XIII<sup>th</sup> century, uniformity of dirham was apparent. E. Pakhomov added that the scholars had no answer to explain this problem as of yet. As we see the researcher ascertained the fact and did not penetrate into the essence of the issue. By the way, in regard to the coordination mentioned above, E. Pakhomov discussed the Georgian reality, the situation, which Mongols faced in East Georgia. This is of great significance for our research. Mongols left untouched the monetary weighing system (Arabian), which was based on dirham. Its weight fluctuated from 2,75 to 3 grams and was common to the Front Asian states. The coordination is evident between Georgia and the Near East countries, which Mongols took into consideration and in which they were themselves involved. Iran of Ilkhans with Qazan-khan's (1295-1304) reforms attached special attention to it.

Consequently, coordination between Georgia and the Near East in the XIII<sup>th</sup> century was also seen in the fact that they based their own monetary system on the dirham weight (4 dirham), determined by the earlier existed Arabian

monetary-weight system. Evidently, this agreement proceeded from the interests of international trade. To fully clarify the issue, it should be made concrete first and only then be generalized. E. Pakhomov's following metrological data are very interesting from this viewpoint. He determined that from the mid-XIII<sup>th</sup> century the weight of Ilkhans', i.e. Hulaguids', dirham equaled the weight of Trabzon aspri and spread in West Georgia – kirmanians (analogues to Trabzon aspri) [Pakhomov E. A., 1970, p 28]. S. Kakabadze discussed dirham of Ilkhans' Iran and Trabzon aspri also from this aspect. He mentioned that Trabzon aspri and Persian dirham are of the same weight. In his opinion, the fact that money unit in the entire East is nearly of the same weight, is no less interesting and important [Kakabadze S., 1925]. The same is shared by Golenko [Golenko K. V., 1955]. As we have seen and already mentioned, the researchers fail to finally clarify the issue connected with the coordination existing between Tebriz and Trabzon, which is proved by vast numismatic material. Just this very coordination is of special importance for us and we see a key to the problem set, namely, unity of the monetary systems of East and West Georgia. It concerns great international trade routes of Levant, the northern section of which crossed Tebriz and Trabzon to which the Georgian coin system is oriented, in our opinion. Our interest is, naturally, in the policy of the states, which through these routes were involved in the trade relations of the East and West and got enormous profit from it. To conduct research in direction of countries connected both with the Levant roads and the then policy may enable us to highlight some issues in a new way. A new approach is required for discussing a great function of Tebriz, which was chosen as their capital by Ilkhans and then by their successor states and for further development of which they took care.

Another question arose in the process of our research – did Qazan-khan take into consideration an international significance of the Tebriz-Trabzon main road or not, while implementing his monetary reforms? The answer was in the reform itself. The reform regulated and put into order the numismatic space, which tied the Tebriz-Trabzon main road. Before Qazan-khan's reforms the weight and standard of coins were not uniform, which impeded the international trade. After the implementation of his reforms, the so-called unified coins were minted of fixed weight, which equaled Trabzon coins of the same weight (2, 13 gr). Such coins were minted in the countries, members of Ilkhanate or free from it and they differed only by the minting-houses [Gabashvili M., 2005, p 158]. Rashid ad-Din, who specially discussed Qazan-khan's monetary reform, added that it was implemented for promotion and arrangement of the international trade. Just from this viewpoint he discussed the Georgian unified coins mentioned above and, what is most important for our research, he gave information that Georgia did not obey Qazan-khan then. Thus, coordination of monetary-coin system suited Georgia as well, which acted proceeding from the trade-economic interests, existing then between the East and the West, proceeding from the special function of the Tebriz-Trabzon main road, a

cardinal point of which Tbilisi was. Just this can explain the situation in the monetary system of the XII<sup>th</sup>-XIV<sup>th</sup> centuries. Spreading of Ilkhans' coins in abundance in East Georgia could not be a reliable proof of its political dependence and could not assist in clarifying duration of their rule. One more interesting fact should be stressed from this viewpoint. Christian symbols and characteristic signs of the Georgian coins disappeared from the Ilkhans' unified coins minted in Georgia, when the country was politically independent from Qazan-khan. Such an important representative of the Mongolian historiography as Rashid ad-Din was apprehended the Georgian coin system within the Mongolian monetary system, at the same time stressing specially Georgia's independence. He also pointed to the condition that otherwise Georgia could not have become a co-participant of the international trade. We would like to turn attention to one more fact in regard to this. We already know that the unified coins minted in Ilkhans' Iran and Georgia had the inscriptions in the Arabian language too. It is interesting here for us that Ilkhans, who were laying the basis for an independent state, did the inscriptions in Arabian, an alien language for them. The association cannot be avoided here with the coins (with the Arabian inscriptions), of the Georgian kings - David Aghmashenebeli, Demetre I (1125-1135), Giorgi III and others. The Arabian inscriptions are also in the European sources of the same period. Mongols, evidently, used this factor and made Arabian inscriptions on their coins and put them as a basis for the Arabian monetary system, proceeding from the role, Muslims, especially Arabs, played in the medieval trade. So, the proof of Ilkhans' coins in Georgia cannot assist us in clarifying duration of Mongols' rule, which was done by the English scholar D. Lang [Lang D., 1955], neither in determining the end of their formal rule. In both cases the year of 1357 was taken [Essays on History of Georgia, 1979]. It is also of great importance that Qazan-khan's monetary system worked even in the period, when the state of Ilkhans did not exist any longer and the system was used by Ilkhans' successor states (Chobanids, Jalairs, etc). The same was done by Georgians.

King of united independent Georgia, Giorgi Brtskinvale (the Splendid, 1314-1346) later minted his money based on the Qazan-khan's monetary system. In the period of his reign minting of coins in the name of Ilkhans had not stopped even for a minute [Ghvaiberidze Ts. , 1986]. The same situation was in the reign of his heir David IX (1346-1360). The same principle was used in minting Giorgi VI's (1393-1407) and Ahmad Jalairi's coins, on which the Georgian king was mentioned with the epithet of "Victorious" [Gabashvili M., 2005, p. 150). After the unified Ilkhan coins of the Tbilisi mint there were in circulation the Tebriz coins of the same type in abundance, which pointed to a special role of Tebriz in the international trade. Mongols, before coming to Front Asia took into consideration the situation in the monetary system and they should also consider the international situation and policy existing then. After Tebriz became a capital of Ilkhans, they faced the issue of Trabzon. They tried to

subject Trabzon through vassalage. Qazan-khan, who knew a great influence of Georgia on Trabzon in his period, tried to attack the Georgia's interests from Trabzon's side and even made a break-through in this direction. When his armed forces were marching to Syria-Egypt with the aim of coming to the South Levant road, one part of his army was sent to Georgia, i.e. to North Levant road, though in vain [Gabashvili M., 2005, p. 160]. Mongols' policy to occupy North and South Levant roads was apparent. It stands to reason that Georgia, in the new situation, responded to this policy. When Georgia's eastern part was occupied by Mongols and Tebriz was also in their hands Georgia, naturally, changed its tactics and regulated and built its monetary policy according to this. Georgia, thus, remained co-participant of the Levant trade. Proceeding from this, we expressed our interest in how the medieval historiography discussed the role and importance of the roads mentioned above. We have analyzed the Tebriz-Trabzon road from this viewpoint in detail in our articles dedicated to the policy of Queen Tamar, Giorgi Brtskinvale, Ilkhans and Trabzon international trade [Gabashvili M., 2003-2004; Gabashvili M., 2003]. We talked in them about the international agreements concluded with the aim of security of this road and protecting the merchants. We can name here Venice Senate resolutions, Genoa special measures, the agreements concerning security of this road concluded between Ilkhans and Italians.

The importance of the Tebriz-Trabzon road seemed to be well apprehended not only by the leaders of the policy of that period, but by the medieval authors as well. They watched the international trade roads, described these roads along with the issues concerning them. For example, Italians pointed to the advantages of this road as compared with others [Gabashvili M., 2003-2004, pp 50-51]. They gave recommendations and the plans promoting its exploitation. They also talked about the privilege of the Tebriz-Trabzon road in relation with the policy of that period.

The road mentioned above was in the centre of Ilkhans' attention and we have dedicated a special article to this issue, in which the policy conducted and the measures adopted in this direction were showed along with the relations with the city-communes of Italy, which obtained great profit from the Black Sea trade [Gabashvili M., 2003-2004, pp 58-59]. Italians mastered well the Tebriz-Trabzon road already from 1292. As to what extent Ilkhans themselves were interested in marine trade was seen from the security guarantees conducted by them on the sea. We would like to pay attention to one more moment in regard to Ilkhans. Analysis of the events showed that their special attention to the road mentioned above was caused by concrete reason. Their campaigns to Syria-Egypt were not successful. They failed to get hold and exercise control of the South Levant road (Baghdad, Aleppo). Therefore their entire attention was turned to the Northern, i.e. Tebriz road [Gabashvili M., 2005, p 157].

The importance of Tebriz increased in such a situation, its marine gate being Trabzon. To master this road meant possession of the world international trade. The geopolitical location of Caucasus, the Near East and Middle Asia should be taken into consideration along with the roads of the greatest importance that crossed them. There were many wishing to get hold of the North and South Levant roads and even today these roads are the hottest spots in the world. The contemporary geopolitical science (H. Macinder et al) mentioned from the very beginning that the owner of these regions and East Europe could thus control the world. In the Middle Ages Georgia was among the countries, which were striving towards these regions. Its foreign policy was built on this. It was Georgia's policy of the East and the West, which became most urgent from the very moment of Georgia's unification (the X<sup>th</sup> century) and was directed to the West, on the one part, and to the East, on the other. I, surely, was oriented at mastering of the Levant roads as well. What is most important, leaders of the medieval Georgian policy were well aware of the fact that control over the Tebriz-Trabzon road meant possession of the world trade reins.

After discussing the problems from this viewpoint, we faced the need for a new apprehension of Queen Tamar's foreign policy, about which we wrote special articles. We mean foundation of the Trabzon Empire and the campaign to Persia [Gabashvili M., 2003]. We tried to clarify the vague issues, which required specification. These issues concerned foundation of the Trabzon Empire by Queen Tamar and 1210 successful campaign to Persia, occupation of the Persian cities – Tebriz, Mian, Maranda, Qazvin, Hoy and Zenjan – by the Georgian army. Both these events were the results of Georgia's eastern and western policy, struggle for mastering the Levant roads, which reached its greatest success in the epoch of Queen Tamar. The analysis of relevant material showed that these two events should be discussed within the single context of Georgia's foreign policy and not isolated, as it was accepted by now. Discussion without their relation impeded correct apprehension of the numismatic material. In result of the problem set correctly, as we shall see below, the numismatic material suited well the purposes and tasks of Queen Tamar's foreign policy mentioned above. The coin and the date of its minting – 1210 – are of great importance from this viewpoint, as it is an expression of Queen Tamar's oriental policy.

The scholars have turned attention to the inscription on the coin, which was done in Arabian and in Persian as well. The researchers explain appearance of the Persian inscription by the rapprochement with the Persian culture, which we do not share in the present case. We see in it more a political factor and substantiate our supposition by the date of its minting. A question arises then: why did the Persian inscription appear in 1210, in the period of Georgia's Persian policy becoming most intensive and of successful campaign in Persia? In our opinion we should consider the coin a reflection of the climax of

Georgia's Persian policy intensification and successful campaign in Persia. We think the same may be said about the unique copper coin, minted by Lasha-Giorgi in the same year, but it should be considered to be already a reflection of the western policy. In this case also, the Arabian inscription informed that king of the kings Giorgi, son of Tamar, is a sword of messiah [Kapanadze D., 1969, p 79]. However, here one moment attracted our attention, which was noticed by numismatists long ago. Namely, image of the king is nearly completely taken from the Byzantine coins of the previous period. An analogous image appeared on the Trabzon Empire coins only in the 30s of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century. It was considered that coins of such type spread first in Georgia and then in Trabzon.

The mentioned coin seems interesting to us, first as the coin itself and then as in its relation to Lasha-Giorgi's above-discussed coin reflecting his oriental policy. We can connect it with Georgia's western policy, i. e. Georgia's claim for Byzantium heritage, the most important stage of which was foundation of the Trabzon Empire by Queen Tamar. That the grounds for this were laid as soon as Georgia was founded is proved by the X<sup>th</sup> century Oshki relief, where Kings David and Bagrat Bagrations were represented with the Byzantine crowns. He is that very David, who united Georgia in the X<sup>th</sup> century and laid the basis for the policy, which reached its most successful summit in the reign of Queen Tamar.

Therefore, we have all the grounds to connect Lasha-Giorgi's both above-mentioned coins, dated by 1210, with the period of Georgia's successful oriental and western policy and, correspondingly, to discuss them in their mutual relation. They represented a reflection of Georgia's oriental and western policy, which was directed, on the one part, to Trabzon and, on the other, to Persia. As we have already mentioned, to discuss these two directions of Georgia's foreign policy isolated, i.e. without their mutual relation, impeded apprehension of Georgia's policy and its real scales and proceeding from this, correct apprehension of the numismatic material. It is a fact that the coins mentioned above were oriented towards the North Levant road (Tebriz-Trabzon). The same was in the period of Mongols' raids, when in result of occupation of East Georgia by Mongols, the country was divided into the eastern and western parts. It was not a chance that mutually coordinated monetary system of both parts of Georgia was built on the monetary system of Trabzon. Consequently, we think that, before Mongols, in conditions of the Georgian policy success, there also existed the money oriented at Levant southern trade. We consider such is the above-mentioned coin minted by Giorgi III, on which there were engraved the names of caliph and Saljuq sultan of Iraq, though they were neither serious force nor had any control in the Near East. Main thing in this case, in our opinion, was orientation to Iraq, through which the South Levant road passed. The thing is that the name of Sultan Muhammad b. Mahmud, mentioned above, was widely spread in the then numismatic space.

We come across it on the coins of David V, son of Demetre I. It should be mentioned that in the name of Muhammad b. Mahmud the coins were minted in Ray and Baghdad, also in the most important cities located on the northern and southern roads of Levant [Japaridze G., Ghvinjilia Z., 2002, pp 298-299].

Our supposition, that there existed Georgia's far-sighted plans, directed at South Levant road, was proved by the oriental sources. By the information of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century Arabian and Persian authors (Ibn al-Athir, Nasavi, Juvaini), Georgians were ready to use different methods with this aim in view – diplomacy, organization of a revolt, campaign to occupy Tebriz and Baghdad, which meant possession of the North and South Levant roads [Ali-Zade A.A., 1956]. The role of Christianity, as a powerful instrument, in this policy was well noticed by Juvaini (the XIII<sup>th</sup> century), according to whom Georgians wanted to replace caliph with catholicos in Baghdad, mosques - with churches [Juvaini, 1974].

While working on these issues, one more condition should be taken into consideration. Namely, the period of the X<sup>th</sup>-XIII<sup>th</sup> centuries, i.e. of spreading of the coins with the Arabian inscriptions, was characterized by such an interesting event of numismatics, as the so-called “silver crisis”. “It is well-known that the period was characterized by a gradual transfer from the silver coins to the copper coins. The “silver crisis” expanded over a vast territory – Caucasus, Front Asia, Middle Asia. However, it was not followed by any economic regress. Just, on the contrary, for Georgia, Middle Asia and Near East it was a period of economic upsurge, of unusual flourishing of the cities. Neither do we consider incidental that coins with the Arabian inscriptions were in the period of the “silver crisis”. Both were conditioned by the demands of the international trade. That the first signs of the “silver crisis” in Georgia were marked on the Tbilisi drams minted at the end of the X<sup>th</sup> century was not incidental either. This was one more proof of a special role of Tbilisi, as of a cardinal junction of North Levant (Tebriz-Trabzon). The events, characteristic to the “silver crisis”, did not disappear even after occupation of Tbilisi. An example of this is the coins minted by the Georgian kings in the period after 1122, in which composition of precious metal and weight was progressively decreasing. The “silver crisis” was everywhere characterized by common terminology, diversification of coins – size, weight and form. In such conditions, over this entire vast territory the coin inscriptions had special burden, which assisted the traders to identify them, especially, when the copper coin was declared to be silver money and corresponding inscription was made on them (“this is dirham”). The inscriptions of such type were characteristic both to the East and to Georgia, for example, to the copper coins of Queen Tamar (1187) and Lasha-Giorgi (1210). These inscriptions are made in the Arabian language, evidently, for certain purposes.

Consequently, discussion of the numismatic material should be conducted through consideration of all the factors mentioned above. Proof of the oriental symbols on the Christian coins and of the Christian symbols – on the oriental coins was conditioned by the international trade. As for Georgia, it was adroitly maneuvering in different political situations. Before and in the period of Mongols its monetary system was built on the Tebriz and Trabzon mutually coordinated monetary system. It was so from unification of Georgia (the X cent.) till the epoch of Queen Tamar, when it became the most powerful state of the Near East. Mongols' raids changed the political picture of the Near East and Georgia's plans, which experienced corrections. This was displayed firstly by numismatic material. As it was mentioned, in East Georgia, invaded by Mongols, there was spread Mongolian money and in West Georgia – the Trabzon aspri and kirmanian were in circulation. At the first sight there was no relation between them. The monetary system of West Georgia and Trabzon is uniform, the same as of East Georgia and Mongols. But the thing is that there was fixed identical weight in the coins of different types in East and West Georgia. On the basis of analyzing vast material of this kind a conclusion may be made that the identical monetary system functioned in East and West Georgia [Gabashvili M., 2005, p. 157]. Thus, it is clear from the analysis of the material mentioned above: the unified monetary system functioned in East and West Georgia, which, in its turn, should be discussed in the relation with mutually coordinated monetary system of Tebriz-Trabzon. Correspondingly, Georgia's monetary policy seemed to be suited to North Levant and, generally, Levant international road. Therefore, the situation in both East and West Georgia should be analyzed in the background of and relation with numismatic situation of the neighboring states. The political condition of these countries and the international situation should evidently be considered as well. Only after this we can answer the question, as to what extent the monetary system of East and West Georgia was an expression of monetary policy of the single Georgia.

Thus, the coins with the Arabian inscription characteristic for the Christian world, Georgia among them, were conditioned, first of all, by the international trade relations. In different, including complicated, political situations the Christian and Islamic countries regulated their monetary-coin system proceeding from the interests of this trade. With this aim in view, both sides considered it necessary to agree, coordinate and cooperate.

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